
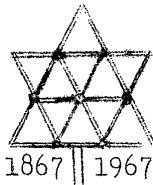
 Grand Bend United Church 

CENTENNIAL PAGEANT



MAY 26th, 1967, 8:00 p.m.

G R A N D B E N D S C H O O L
A U D I T O R I U M

Sponsored by

The United Church Women.



P R O G R A M M E

- PRELUDE
O CANADA
WELCOME and INTRODUCTION Mrs. G. E. Morrow
- THE BURNING OF BREWSTER'S DAM . . Alec Hamilton, Director
Narrator - Mrs. Alec Hamilton
Cast - Fred Willert, Murray Desjardine, Jim Love,
Glenn Manley, Al Parker, Wellwood Gill,
Ed Gill, Jack Eagleson, Murray Venner,
Johnson Patterson, Willis Gill
- THE METHODIST WHITE CHURCH LUMBER TRANSFER
Les Greenwood, Director
Narrator - Mrs. J. Eagleson
Cast - Leo Desjardine, Peter Haist, Gary Willert,
Fred Desjardine, Bradley Hamilton, Thomas
Parker, Keith Freebairn, Rick Hendrick
- THE PRESBYTERIANS AND REV. S. A. CARRIERE
- Mrs. N. Greenwood, Director
Narrator - Mrs. W. Blewett
Cast - Mrs. E. Webb, Mrs. C. Love, Mrs. G. Thomas
Mrs. E. Gill, Mrs. C. Lovie, Mrs. G. Love,
Mrs. K. Roberts, Mrs. G. Kading, W. Love,
D. Hendrick, K. Gill.
- THE CAMPER'S SERVICES)
LAYING THE CORNERSTONE) . . Narrator - Mrs. W. Sturdevant
BURNING THE MORTGAGE) . . Cast - (Too numerous to list)
SILVER ANNIVERSARY)
- CONCLUSION Mrs. C. Kennedy
- THE CENTENNIAL HYMN Audience and Cast
- BENEDICTION Rev. G. E. Morrow

100 YEAR HISTORY OF CHURCH IN GRAND BEND

A Scottish immigrant, Brewster, bought land for a mill and a dam on the river in 1832. Mill workers built their log houses nearby and slowly immigrants found their way from the London Road, now No. 4 Highway, through Friedburg (Dashwood), to the lake and the little community. In 1850 Dr. W. H. Smith found Grand Bend to be an out-of-the-way bush community with no settlement closer than eight or ten miles away. In 1851, irate farmers, whose lands were flooded on account of the dam, wrecked and burned the dam and mill. Consequently the possibility of an itinerate minister was small. The entire population of Stephen Township was only 500, but the desire for community worship service was growing. About this time the settlers requested the Canada Company for land to build a school house, and a log school was erected at the foot of the sand hills, now the Cemetery. This was used as a school house, temperance hall and place of worship.

Eventually a petition, signed by Presbyterian families was sent to Presbytery in Clinton on Oct. 14th, 1862. It asked for a baptismal service. The Rev. John Lagie was appointed to visit and baptize. A student was sent for six weeks each summer, but a two-point charge--Grand Bend and Drysdale--proved too much in the days of foot travel. Soon a student was sent to Grand Bend and Stephen, and another (French Speaking) to Hay and Stanley Townships. Reports were favourable of a growing congregation and in 1872 Rev. Henry Gracie from Thames Rd. organized the Presbyterian Congregation, and served Sacrament in the old log school house. Elders mentioned were Wm. Caithness and Wm. Turnbull. Communicants and contributions increased and two years later it was decided that a church of brick construction seating 160 people at a cost of \$1,445 be built directly in front of the log school house. It was dedicated July 19th, 1874. Wm. Fulton, Hugh Love and John Ruth were the elders mentioned.

An early school teacher writes of Grand Bend--"In those days it was a somewhat rough and ready place, with three taverns, each with its bar, and it was quite common for men from other places to come for periodical spree. While this was damaging to the reputation of the community, the residents were as a rule, sober, industrious and God-fearing people."

Rev. Donald McRae, Minister in 1878, was followed by Andrew Glendening in 1879. The salary was \$260--promised or paid, was the question--and \$32 was raised for missions. Rev. S. A. Carriere came as a student Minister in 1880 and 1881. He was French Canadian, and in 1882 he was ordained and returned to stay until his retirement in 1922. This was his challenge--to unite English and French, Presbyterian, Baptist and Roman Catholic, and to evangelize the district. The most colourful account of his life and ministry is told by his son, Emery, in a letter to the Tweedsmuir book. It commences with what he knew of his family tree. My great-grandmother was married at 14. Husband No. 1 lasted four years. The young widow married again at 18, but husband No. 2 only lasted two weeks. Then at the ripe old age of 19 she married my great-grandfather." He writes--"She must have learned to make a palatable pea soup by this time, for he shows up in the family records many years later." Rev. Mr. Carriere spoke French and English fluently, and was gifted musically. The young minister realized that his hopes of uniting stalwart R.C.'s and stubborn Scottish Presbyterians was something to be prayed about. He started with the young people in Sunday School, and through his effort, God's help, time and inter-marriage, his work was reported at Presbytery--"Things are going well at Grand Bend."

He exchanged pulpits with the Minister at Bayfield one Sunday, and met Margaret Campbell. A visit to Bayfield each week soon developed. He boarded with Grann Armstrong who kept a small store and Post Office at Brewster (Port Blake). It took three hours to drive from Bayfield with a horse and buggy, so if he left the charming Margaret at midnight, he didn't get home until 3 a.m. He devised all sorts of plans to enter the house without disturbing the family and thus avoid being teased. One night he entered by way of the cellar window. As he lowered himself to the basement floor he encountered a newly constructed shelf laden with preserves. When the crashing jars stopped rolling, a light and the Armstrongs' slippered feet appeared at the top of the stairs. He had failed again.

In due course he and Margaret were married and moved into a rented house on the south side of the bridge. His salary was \$750 a year near the close of the century, with which to support a wife and now--four boys.

An epidemic of diphtheria cast a gloom over the community in 1896. Colin, his son, was one of the victims. For 20 years Rev. Mr. Carriere preached at Corbett in the morning, in Grand Bend at 2 p.m. and in French at 4 p.m. Choir practice and practice for the Christmas concerts (which became widely known) was held in the Carriere home where there was a reed organ. Emery writes, "Thank goodness our house was large enough for music and sleeping children or I would have led a disturbed childhood." In 1901 a manse was built next to the church--9 large rooms at a cost of \$2,200, and the family moved there, where Marguerite, a daughter was born. Mr. Carriere continued his ministry until his retirement in 1922, and when his death occurred in 1928 he was buried here in the cemetery. He was truly a colourful pioneer, a man of God in a virgin community. Few of Grand Bend's older residents cannot recall a favourite anecdote of his Ministry here. He was followed by Rev. A. M. Grant who was instrumental in union.

Meanwhile the Methodists had been developing their own church. At first week-night meetings were held in homes, conducted by the Methodist Minister from Bayfield, during 1869 and perhaps earlier. Around 1874 the erection of a church was discussed, but as so often happens then, as now, the site could not be agreed upon. Some wanted it in the village, some at the corner of Highway 81 and the B-Line. The story goes, that the lumber was delivered to the B-line site, but one dark night before construction had begun, it was mysteriously moved to the corner of Highway 81 and the Mollard Line. Here a frame church was built and painted white and was to be known as the "White Church" and served the congregation till Union. Families mentioned were Mollard, Robison, Sherritt, Page, Lewis, Holt, Lovie, Fallis, Gill and Oliver at the time it was dedicated in 1885. The Minister lived at Corbett at that time and had eight charges. By 1907 Greenway, Shipka and the White Church made up a three-point charge, served by a number of Ministers. Rev. W. J. Maines was the minister at time of Union.

In 1924 Bishop Seager wrote asking the Presbyterian session if the Anglicans might use the church for a service during July and August, which was done. The Anglican Church, St. John's-by-the-lake, was built in 1948.

Another religious group at the beginning of the century in the Bend, was the campers who gathered for Bible

Study on the beach every summer Sunday. Chas. Gil offered them a shady spot in his park, rather a natural amphitheatre, and visiting ministers were invited to conduct the service. These became very popular and well attended. Miss Frieda Sparkman and Miss Evelyn Hueston shared the organist's position. Names connected with this group were Blowe Southcott, Rennie, Heuston, Gibbs, McCallum, May Jones, Dent, Dickson, Parkinson, Linkleiter and Clysdale.

Rev. Grant began his Presbyterian Ministry in 1922, and it soon became evident union was anticipated between the Presbyterians and the Methodists. Rev. Grant's vision suggested the campers be included in this union. They went along with the idea, but were reluctant to give up their outdoor services. They were able to raise enough to buy the lots we now enjoy in July and August, and presented them to the United Church.

On June 27, 1926, the formal service of Union was conducted by Rev. Grant in Grand Bend, and in the afternoon by Rev. Maines in Greenway. This ended their respective jobs and they both decided to leave. Rev. J. M. Colling preached his first sermon to a United congregation under the trees we still enjoy, on July 1st, 1926. The Union had taken place but the new home was not ready. Next year on May 24th four cornerstones were laid, and the next morning workmen began dismantling the old Presbyterian Church so the brick could be used for insulation in the new church. On Nov. 13, 1927, the church was dedicated.

Ministers since that time have been: 1930-Rev. S. E. Mathers; 1934-Rev. J. B. Moore; 1938-Rev. C. E. BeaCom; 1942-Rev. T. L. Cleave; 1947-Rev. K. Wood; 1951-Rev. C. Smith; 1956-Rev. A. E. Holley; 1962-Rev. C. A. Brittain, and 1965-Rev. G. E. Morrow.

In 1944 during Rev. Mr. Cleave's Ministry, a colorful ceremony celebrated the burning of the mortgage. The new manse was built about 1954, during Rev. Mr. Smith's ministry, and the old 1900 structure is now part of Eisenbach's Museum. In 1951 the Church celebrated their Silver Anniversary. Twenty-five years of co-operation to take pride in. The past inspires us--the present heartens us--while the future beckons us on to new fields of endeavour and service.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The United Church Women and the pageant Committee composed of Mrs. W. Sturdevant, Mrs. C. Kennedy and Mrs. W. Blewett, wish to acknowledge their grateful thanks for the willing co-operation of the entire cast who have taken part in this pageant.

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Thanks also for the following:

- The Anniversary Cake - The Explorers
- Date cards - C. G. I. T.
- Wardrobe - Mrs. R. Keyes and Mrs. G. E. Morrow
- Make-up - Ethel's Beauty Shop
- Lighting - Fred Willert
- Music - Mr. D. Gill and the choir
- Posters - Gr. 7 & 8, Grand Bend Public School.
- Ticket Sales - Marlene Brenner
- Publicity - Irene Kennedy
- Stage-settings and scenery - Helen Sturdevant
- Programme & script typing - Hazel Blewett

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Backward we look, oh God of all our days,
Guard of our youth and guide of all our ways,
Forward we look, nor fear what waiteth there,
Onward we move relying on Thy care.

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"THE CENTENNIAL HYMN"

O God, our Heav'nly Father,
We lift our hearts to Thee,
In thankfulness and gladness
We sing from sea to sea;
For Thou hast richly blessed us
With countless gifts of love,
And always Thou hast showered us
With mercies from above.

Our fathers in Thee trusted,
And never were dismayed,
Thy statutes they respected,
Thy righteous laws obeyed;
Thy goodness came upon them
Thou wast their strength and stay,
Thy providence sustained them
And led them on their way.

Our leaders Thou directed
To build in this fair land,
A nation with a purpose
In thoughtful vision planned;
That all of our endeavours
May be of lasting worth,
That even as in Heav'n above,
Thy will may rule on earth.

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